To write contemporary history or not to write it is really a dilemma for the historian. Indeed there are formidable obstacles to the writing of recent history—non-availability of documents, absence of a perspective and lack of objectivity or detachment. But if it is true that each generation must write history anew, then the present generation of Pakistani historians require no apology to record and interpret the recent past of their nation. It would be long before British Government documents, Congress and League records and the personal papers of the leading figures like Jinnah, Liaqat, Gandhi, Nehru, and Azad are made available to research scholars. Till then, perhaps, it might not be possible “to write in depth” on the Pakistan Movement. But one cannot wait. The present generation of Pakistanis demand to know how this homeland of ours came to be established. The query must be answered and it is far better if it is answered by historians trained in their craft than by less competent persons.

In recent years several studies of the Pakistan Movement have come out. Dr. Waheed’s Towards Pakistan is perhaps the most recent and certainly a notable addition to this growing literature on the Pakistan Movement. Towards Pakistan is substantially based on Dr. Waheed’s Ph.D. thesis at the University of Toronto. It is a survey of major currents of Muslim politics during the period 1928-1940 and tells the exciting story of the genesis of Pakistan. In an introductory chapter the author tells us how Sayyid Ahmad Khan extricated the Muslim community from a state of stupor to a consciousness of being a cultural entity. Unfortunately he confines his attention solely to Sayyid Ahmad Khan and completely ignores such other notable contributors to Muslim renaissance as Hali and Amir Ali. The logic of events at home and abroad led the Muslims deviate from the course of loyalty to British Government and non-participation in politics which Sayyid Ahmad Khan had chartered for them. This inaugurated an era of unprecedented Hindu-Muslim unity and joint political action but this proved short-lived and nothing constructive came out of it. Dr. Waheed’s comment on the Khilafat Movement is illuminating. He writes:

“... Indian Muslims were weak and therefore insecure. They always looked for something to lean upon for strength and security. In the earlier years they had leaned upon the British support ... But many things had happened in recent years to weaken their confidence in this support. Now they were on the look out for a fresh anchor and they found it in the 'Khilafat'” (p. 30).

The main narrative opens with a discussion of the Nehru Report (1928) which marked “the parting of the ways” as the unitary form of government envisaged in it was rejected by all shades of Muslim political opinion. Dr. Waheed follows through the maze of claims, counter-claims, debates, correspondence, negotiations and schemes that filled the subsequent years with great clarity and objectivity. Naturally the Congress-League rivalry gets the lion’s share of the treatment but the minor Muslim political parties and their role have not been ignored.

Dr. Waheed’s basic thesis is that most of the leading figures of the Pakistan
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Movement started their public careers as ardent nationalists advocating independence, striving for Hindu-Muslim unity and asking for nothing more than adequate safeguards for their community. The numerically and economically inferior Muslim community was naturally apprehensive of a permanent, well-advanced Hindu majority.

The Congress leaders were not anti-Muslim but in their doctrinaire addiction to parliamentary form of government and its norms and practices failed to grasp the realities of the Indian communal scene. They showed lack of statesmanship and lack of generosity when they refused to accept a loose federation with maximum provincial autonomy and refused to accord weightage and to share power with the Muslim League when they formed ministries in 1937. This turned many nationalist Muslims into 'communalists' who were driven, as a last resort, to demand a separate Muslim State.

Dr. Waheed has debunked the charge of "divide and rule" levelled against the British Government by Congress leaders. While no sane person today would suggest that Pakistan is the creation of the British, yet it is difficult to exonerate the British Government entirely of its responsibility in accentuating the Hindu-Muslim differences. From Dr. Waheed's account one gets the impression of the British Government being a silent and innocent on-looker of the highly exacerbated communal situation in the sub-continent.

Dr. Waheed has emphasized the protection of religious and cultural interests as the motive force of the demand for Pakistan. In his opinion there were irreconcilable differences between the culture, ideas and way of life of the two communities to permit them to live peacefully together. There were equally strong economic interests and psychological factors which he has completely ignored. No explanation of the creation of Pakistan would be complete without a socio-economic analysis of the then Indian society.

Perhaps the best part of the work is his discussion of Iqbal's political philosophy and its role in the creation of Pakistan. He has convincingly established that Iqbal did not put forth the idea of a separate Muslim State in his famous Allahabad Address though gradually he came round to accept the idea as the only solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. But Iqbal was thinking "in terms of the ideological state for the realization of the ultimate purpose of Islam" (p. 145) whereas for the Muslim League Pakistan was to be a nation State, an end in itself.

Towards Pakistan, on the whole, is a work of painstaking research marked by objectivity of approach and lucidity of style. Dr. Waheed's judgments are sober and balanced and nowhere is he carried away by emotions or passions.

A few examples are cited here. On Azad he writes: "Whatever judgement may ultimately be passed on his conduct and career, his sincerity and his moral integrity cannot be questioned" (p. 176).

His evaluation of Pirpur and Sharif Reports is:

"These reports were drafted by the Muslim Leaguers and not unnaturally they are at times marked by some extravagance of language. It would
have been surprising had it been otherwise. The Reports were the result of the efforts of partisans and not of an impartial tribunal” (p. 102).

His estimate of Gandhi’s personality is:

“The sincerity of Mr. Gandhi’s desire to do full justice to the Muslims as fellow citizens of India cannot be questioned. But he was, in Nehru’s words, ‘a Hindu to the innermost depths of his being’, and however earnestly he sought to do so, he could not appreciate the Muslim point of view” (p. 110).

The production of the book particularly the cover and the binding leaves much to be desired.

KARACHI

M. S. Khan, AN UNPUBLISHED TREATISE OF MISKAWAIH ON JUSTICE OR RISĀLA Fī MĀHIYAT AL-‘ADL LI MISKAWAIH, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1964, pp. 38.

Dr. M. Sabir Khan has prepared the text of this so far unpublished treatise of Ibn Miskawaih very carefully and critically. This beautifully printed booklet which covers 38 pages presents a very important text of the celebrated Muslim thinker, Ibn Miskawaih, with an excellent English translation, annotations and introduction. The author deserves commendation and congratulations for the amount of labour he has so arduously put to his project.

It was in the year 1958 that Dr. Khan asked me to check the text of this treatise and sent me a copy of the rotograph manuscript. I am so glad that this rare treatise has, at last, seen the light of the day.

The text has been prepared, indeed, with a great labour. He has, however, unnecessarily undertaken the pain of supplying full اعراب, the diacritical marks and vowel points. Realising the difficulty one confronts in reading proofs so minutely as the Arabic اعراب and marks require, the author may be excused for certain mistakes that have inevitably crept in. See, for example, the following list:

Page 13, line 6 instead of

Page 13, line 6 instead of